

February 13, 2019

Connecticut General Assembly
Attn: Public Safety & Security Committee
Hartford, CT

RE: Written Testimony in Support of HB 6376

Dear Senator Bradley, Representative Verrengia and all the honorable members of the Public Safety and Security Committee:

My name is Paul Lemieux and I am a resident of Bristol, CT. I am writing today to seek your support for HB 6376.

In September 1987, I was sworn in as a "Peace Officer" for the Farmington Police Department. I served proudly for 24 years, retiring in November 2011 as a Sergeant. From 2011 to the present day, I continue to serve as a part-time "Peace Officer" with Farmington. In November 2011, I was hired by The State of CT as an Inspector with The Department of Motor vehicles, assigned to the Commercial Vehicle Safety Division, a position I still currently hold.

I was trained at the CT Police Academy in Meriden in 1987 and have held a Police Officer Certification card issued by POSTC – Police Officer Standards Training Council ever since. These certification cards are issued to certified individual members of organized law enforcement agencies. I currently hold 2 certification cards with the same ID number; one issued through Farmington the other through DMV. My uniforms and duty belts for Farmington PD & DMV are very similar except for the shoulder patches. However, a major difference is when I work an occasional part-time shift in Farmington I'm considered a "Peace Officer". When I work full time as an Inspector, I'm not considered a "Peace Officer".

At issue is the fact that CGS 53a-3(9) does not define a MV Inspector as a "Peace Officer". This state law enforcement agency is the only one that does not have this designation. All Inspectors are graduates of the CT Police Academy and maintain a current POSTC Police Officer Certification card. This certification requirement also applies to Municipal, Tribal, Environmental and State Capitol Peace Officers. This "Peace Officer" definition by statute, also applies to individuals who have not attended the CT Police Academy or obtained Police Certification cards issued by POSTC. An example of this is Correction Officers, Judicial Marshals and a State Marshal.

Applying this definition to Inspectors will cover several CGS that were enacted that use the term "Peace Officers" only, therefore leaving out Inspectors. A few examples of these are:

- CGS 29-1k Emergency Alert System – used for suspects that killed or gravely injured "Peace Officers"

- CGS 53a-111 Arson 1st – at the scene of a fire that subjects a substantial risk of bodily injury to a “Peace Officer”.
- CGS 14-164AA Vehicle “black box” recordings can only be obtained by “Peace Officers”.
- Any future legislation that uses the “term “Peace Officer” will not apply to Inspectors as it stands today.

Inspectors will have an increased roll in traffic safety if legislation is passed to implement tolls on our highway system. Drivers, including commercial vehicles, will find alternate routes around toll stations to reduce their costs at the expense of our business and residential communities.

Applying “Peace Officer” designation to Inspectors will not distract us from our mission of reducing accidents involving commercial motor vehicles on our roads. Our authority is derived from CGS 14-8. This will not expand our powers and is a no cost initiative.

In closing, I ask that you support one of your state law enforcement agencies that has been left out of this definition, by supporting HB 6376.

Paul Lemieux
Bristol, CT